One of my grade school textbooks on farming from a hundred years ago shows two pictures; the expensive way to store machinery and the cheap way. The row of equipment left out in the weather leaked uncomfortably like mine, and the shed was just what I wanted to build. Cheap is not, not building a shed, in the long run. It was high time to quit the expensive storage method.

That doesn't mean I spend a lot of money, either. I thank my lucky stars for friends and neighbors. The carpenter holds my hand through my projects, and first we had to determine the site. I had stakes along the edge of the woods, on a slope, in a spot where you could never grow anything. It would have taken a lot of grading and gravel to make it usable, and it would always be on a hill. The unhandy, out of the way spot was soon rejected.

As we walked around, we remembered the concept of a pattern language, observing the way things naturally are. The story goes like this: A college had just been built, and they were trying to decide where to put the sidewalks. Instead, they held classes for a year and by then the paths were obvious. We looked underneath the two trees in the field at my row of farm equipment and realized I had already determined the best place for it.

Cedar tees abound on our property, way up the holler in the back. Right next to the building site was a thick stand of cedars being overtaken by hardwoods. Unfortunately, it was on my neighbors' property. Fortunately, I have great neighbors. He let us cut a few trees for the posts.

The local sawmills sometimes get orders that no one picks up. I got a great deal on a pile of two by two material, and some cull planks. I like to get the wood first, and design the building around what's available. There were some 12 foot 2x6's, and some 10 foot. So our shed has a row of 12 foot rafters and a roof of 10 foot rafters. We designed an apron on front, which matches the 4/12 roof pitch and gives extra protection.

Another neighbor lent us a post hole digger, and soon we had 15 poles in the holes. But we did not tamp them in tight like I usually do. Instead, we braced each one two ways. Next, we put the beams up, cut and erected the rafters and then nailed on the lathe. We didn't have it squared yet, but we knew we had the makings of squareness because we cut every rafter the same. Come-along chains and ropes pulled appropriately squared up the roof, and then we tamped in the posts.

Other friends dropped by, and soon the back wall was covered in sassafras. A pile of second quality tin I had gotten real cheap had to be sorted and have the bad ends cut off. Yes, it's uneven at the seams, but it's all up. A sidewall is boxed in, but the tend towards the garden was simply to good a review, and I happened to have a few extra 2x6's just the right length for a floor.

So we have a new shed, with equipment in it already, complete with a small, floored room to store vegetables and baskets in. The cedar poles give it a rustic elegance, and the funky tin fits in with the nearby, old barn. It looks like it grew there, sprouting up to keep the weather off of the manure spreaders, mowing machine and plows. A little expense now is the cheap way to go, and I'm already planning another one. Once again, old time farming knowledge, along with friends and neighbors, helps the farm on Long Hungry.